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Economic Development
Corporation**

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Andrew M. Alper
President

December 16, 2003

Hon. Roger Nober
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20423-0001



RE: STB Finance Docket No. 34428:
Petition of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for
Declaratory Order

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As a partner with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in the Staten Island Railroad (SIRR) reactivation project, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) strongly supports the Port Authority's Petition for a Declaratory Order regarding the proposed construction of a connection between the lines of the former Staten Island Railroad and the so-called Chemical Coast Line, which is one of the rail lines owned and operated by Consolidated Rail Corporation and its owners the Norfolk Southern Corporation and CSX Corporation in New Jersey (the "Chemical Coast Connector").

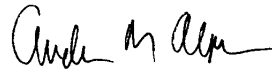
We agree with the Port Authority that this connector does not constitute an extension of a line of railroad. This construction will permit the reconnection of the former SIRR with the Conrail system, a connection that formerly occurred at a number of locations via rail connections and car float operations, as the Port Authority has described in its Petition. As a result, NYCEDC respectfully requests that the Board grant the Port Authority's Petition for a Declaratory Order.

As the Board is aware, the SIRR was abandoned in 1990. The long awaited reactivation of the SIRR will promote much needed economic development for Staten Island and allow business growth to occur at the Howland Hook Marine Terminal, Visy Paper and the VanBro Corporation. As this project will also reduce regional truck traffic and its commensurate air pollutants, this project is a "win-win" from an economic development and an environmental protection prospective.

We respectfully urge the STB to rule in favor of the Port Authority's petition, and to do so expeditiously. The Port Authority needs a determination from this Board soon to permit it to commence construction in a timely way, as described in the Petition. Any

further delay to the reactivation of the SIRR will impede Staten Island economic development, and add to traffic congestion and air pollution. We look forward to the STB's affirmative response to the Port Authority's Petition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Alper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrew" being more prominent.

Andrew M. Alper

cc: Mr. Vernon Williams